

A STUDY OF SELECTED GUIDANCE
FUNCTIONS OF THE ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL
IN COMMUNITIES OF LESS THAN 10,000
IN THE STATE OF IOWA

BY

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Statistics indicate the elementary school population in the next ten years will increase to a point which will tax most existing school facilities.

The postwar baby boom will within the next year or two place a serious strain on the country's limited primary school facilities. By 1960, the school enrollment will be about thirty-five per cent higher than at the present time.¹

This increase will bring about many new problems to education. The present war emergency has brought about a shortage of materials for school buildings and there is every indication that this will continue for some time to come. This serious cut-back on equipment for schools will bring about the continued use of old buildings and old equipment. In the State of Iowa this situation is increased by the fact that it ranks forty-eighth in having teachers with a bachelor's degree. The majority of the teachers who bring about this low ranking lie within the elementary field. Even with improved certification requirements it will be many years before a bachelor's degree can be required for certification within the state.

Putting these facts together it is easy to picture the school of

¹Population and Economic Trends, p. 30. A survey prepared by Lionel D. Edie & Co., Inc., and presented by Dr. Lionel D. Edie at a luncheon meeting. New York: Lionel D. Edie & Co., Inc., 1950.

tomorrow. The partially trained teacher will be attempting to meet the needs of children in an overly-populated and outmoded classroom. The children attempting to release their physical energy through a natural outlet on the playground will be stymied due to a lack of adequate play area and equipment. The supply of curriculum material will be determined by a budget. The budget, in turn, will be determined by a tax base already at its limits in the minds of people who are paying for a war just completed and another one in its infancy. This look into the future has implications that are far-reaching. It does not take a pedagogical mind to realize that this school will be inadequate in every way to meet the challenge of training youth for democratic living.

One of the most vital factors in developing any individual is proper guidance. This thought is expressed much more adroitly by Frank G. Davis and Pearl S. Norris when they say that education in its simplest definition is growth. Growth is the result of two factors: first, the effort put forth by the child in an attempt to grow up; and second, the effort of the teacher to help each child to achieve his fullest individual development. This effort by the teacher may be termed guidance.¹

One can find many more detailed definitions of guidance today in educational literature. They have value in that they focus attention upon the educational problem discussed herein. For example:

Guidance is that systematic, organized phase of the educational process which helps a youth grow in his power to give point and direction to his own life, to the end that he may gain richer personal

¹Frank G. Davis and Pearl S. Norris, Guidance Handbook for Teachers, p. 5. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1949.

experiences while making his own unique contribution to our democratic society.¹

Many educators have termed guidance in phrases such as "pupil adjustment" and "fitting the school to the pupil." In the research conducted for this study, the following definition seemed to best express in rather simple and concise terms what the guidance process is:

It is a process of helping persons understand themselves by discovering their own needs, interests, and capacities; to formulate their own goals and to make plans for realizing them; and to evaluate their progress with reference not only to self-realization but also to potential contribution to the welfare of society.²

In order for the teacher to help the child, one thing is essential--the teacher must know his child. In this ever overcrowding situation of the schools there seems to be very little possibility that a teacher would know every child to a degree that he would be able to help the child reach the fulfillment of his potentialities. It would, therefore, seem logical that some other individual, group, or agency would become responsible for setting up and operating a functioning guidance program which would aid the classroom teacher in her guidance work. This responsibility in the modern school is allocated to the principal.

In order to get a clearer picture of the functions performed by the elementary principal in cities of ten thousand population or less, this study was undertaken.

¹Welty D. Lefever, Archie M. Turrell, and Henry I. Weitzel, Principles and Techniques of Guidance, p. 3. New York: The Ronald Press Co., 1950.

²Ruth Strang, The Role of the Teacher in Personnel Work, p. 29. New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1946.

The role of the elementary principal is as complicated as the facets on a large diamond. In order to gain a clear picture of this administrative area a careful examination must be conducted.

CHAPTER II

THE ROLE OF THE ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL

The elementary school principalship has changed considerably in the last century. A great many factors have contributed to the transition. Some of the outstanding ones are:

1. Growth of large city school systems.
2. Expansion of the three R's curriculum in an effort to provide for the needs of every child.
3. Recognition of the importance of the elementary school in the later progress of the child in school.
4. The adoption of state certification laws through the efforts of State Departments of Public Instruction.
5. In recent years graduate schools of education have offered to those preparing for a principalship courses which would give them a broad background in the areas basic to an understanding of this position.
6. Professional organizations on local, state, and national levels have contributed immeasurably to the improvement of the principalship.

There are many other factors which have influenced the position of the elementary principalship but they are difficult to distinguish. However, the past always has implications for the future.

The position of the elementary principal has attained status because of those who have strived in the past to bring the profession to its rightful place among the administrative positions of the public school. It remains

for those now in the profession to constantly further those influences which will help to elevate the position of the elementary principal to still greater heights.

The functions of the elementary principal have developed not only from the factors previously mentioned but also from the task presented to the elementary school. The three major responsibilities given to the elementary school are:

1. The elementary school remains the one place all children must attend and, therefore, it is automatically given the responsibility to provide education for all.
2. The elementary school has been presented with the duty of teaching and fostering those ideals and attitudes which are necessary for effective living in our democratic society.
3. The elementary school provides a basis for all learning, sometimes referred to as the basic skills. Whatever the term, it is this foundation which is needed for progress through the various stages of our educational process.

The principal should play a major role in aiding the elementary school to accomplish the purpose for which it has been established.

The principalship has gone through a period of transition as stated previously. This period has been divided into four stages of development by Michleson.

1. The teaching principal.
2. The clerical principal
3. The managerial or administrative principal.
4. The leadership principal.¹

¹William N. Newsom and Peter P. Mickleson, "The Role of the Principal in the Modern Elementary School," Elementary School Journal, L (September, 1949), 20.

These stages should be of significance because most principals today perform some of the functions which are part of all the types mentioned above.

Functions of the Elementary Principal

With an understanding of some of the forces affecting the growth of the principalship and the resulting pattern of development, it therefore seems essential to arrive at what actually constitutes the major functions of an elementary principal today.

One may find in educational literature various attempts at cataloging the functions of an elementary administrator. Otto states:

Although the regulations are not uniform nor equally comprehensive for all the cities studied, Scanlon's summary provides an imposing array of principals' duties and responsibilities which have received specific action by school boards. A perspective of the item included may be gained from the categories into which Scanlon organized the data. These categories are:

1. General regulations.
2. The principal and pupils—transfer, assembly and dismissal, general discipline, corporal punishment, suspension, health, employment certificates, errands, and books, prizes, presents, and carfare.
3. The principal and teachers—relationship with his teachers, employment and assignment, and teachers' meetings.
4. The principal and school property—school buildings, grounds, and equipment (general responsibilities), heating and ventilation, use of telephones, fire protection, fire drills, fire escapes and fire alarm systems, fire precautions, and janitorial service.
5. The principal and clerical and business affairs—general records and reports, records and reports concerning pupils, teachers, and school property.
6. The principal and miscellaneous regulations—hours, entertainments, picnics, Parent-Teacher Association, flag display, lunch rooms, advertising, selling merchandise, and school clocks.¹

¹Henry J. Otto, Elementary Organization and Administration, p. 548. New York: Appleton Century & Co., 1944.

The above categories deal with the managerial and clerical type of principalship. The six major functions of a principal as seen by Newsom and Mickelson are more in line with the concept of the leadership principal.

The principal in the modern elementary school has six major functions:

1. Administering his school democratically.
2. Carrying out the policies and programs established by the administration.
3. Providing leadership in setting up an educational philosophy for his school.
4. Providing stimulation and leadership in the development of an up-to-date curriculum.
5. Providing an effective program of public relations.
6. Professionalizing teaching in the school.¹

Doubtless the functions performed by a principal in one community will vary with those in another community. There are, however, some general or ever-present responsibilities which can be examined with profit.

Leadership

The principal's first and most important duty is that of a leader, a democratic administrator, a teacher among teachers; expressed in many ways, leadership still becomes the principal's major responsibility.

To stimulate staff members, parents, and community groups to think cooperatively on the real problems confronting the school requires the best in leadership qualities.

School Plant Management

The duties of directing and supervising the maintenance of a school plant usually falls upon the principal. It is his duty to make certain that

¹Newsom and Mickelson, op. cit., p. 21.

sanitary conditions are maintained whether in the building, on the playground, or in areas adjacent to the school site. By working with teachers and the custodial staff, the elementary principal can develop good standards of heating, lighting, and ventilation. In order to insure proper janitorial service, the elementary administrator should be familiar with modern methods of building care.

The elimination of all possible safety hazards within the building is equally as important as taking preventive measures in the playground areas. The guiding principle in decisions of this nature should be that the school plant serve the needs of the children. No school plant can ever remain in good condition unless all the individuals using its facilities take pride in the plant's cleanliness and appearance.

Instructional Materials

The administering of instructional supplies is a function of major importance assigned to the principal. His primary task is to make certain that supplies needed to adequately carry on the educational program of the school are on hand in sufficient amounts whenever they are needed. The responsibility for setting up and operating an organizational machinery which will accomplish this task also belongs to the elementary administrator. The manner in which this machinery operates will have considerable effect on the program carried on in the classroom. The method of obtaining supplies should be arranged to facilitate the learning activity of the school.

The whole area of supplies and equipment will become progressively more difficult for the principal as his school moves toward a more contemporary and flexible learning program. He must strive to find ways and means

to do the job effeciently, effectively, and democratically.

Curriculum

The curriculum, the heart of the elementary school, demands careful attention and guidance from the principal. He must be careful to avoid robbing a curriculum of its effectiveness by superimposing restrictions and conventionalism of organization. The principal should provide leadership for curriculum planning and revision. In order to contribute to such an effort effectively, he should be informed on curriculum experimentation and trends; he should collect curriculum materials; he should possess a functional educational philosophy of his own; and he should understand the administrative implication of various types of school curriculum.

Parents

One of the primary functions of a principal is to meet with parents. It is important that the principal build rapport in terms of the school's effectiveness and also the school's needs in all relationships with parents. He should strive to improve every contact the school has with the parents. Every letter, telephone call, or communication of any nature which involves a parent should be recognized as a means of creating respect and good will.

The elementary principal working with his staff and parent groups should endeavor to develop a report to parents which will portray a child's progress in meaningful terms. This does not mean a report card in the formal sense. Parents who feel the school is endeavoring in every way possible to fulfill its obligations are more than glad to cooperate with the principal in meeting and solving the problems which mutually affect them.

Legal Responsibilities

The elementary principal has certain duties assigned to him by legal groups or authorities. It is of prime importance that every principal understand his legal limits within a given state. In order to accomplish this he should gain a knowledge of the school laws of the state in which he lives, particularly those provisions which have significance to a principal. It thus becomes essential for the elementary administrator to become familiar with the rules and regulations pertaining to his area established by the local board of education.

The elementary principal is often called upon to carry out policies established by the superintendent. Occasionally a policy is formulated and put in effect which is out of harmony with those already established. It remains the duty of the principal in a situation such as this to act with discretion in applying the policy until the full implications of this course of action have been discussed with the administrative head of the school.

Professional Growth

The contemporary elementary principal is faced with the challenge of making the elementary principalship an office of true professional leadership. The basic responsibility for developing professionalism lies within the principals themselves. They may accomplish this end in many ways. A cooperative staff analysis of educational problems would be a step in the right direction. The utilization of the findings of research, experience, and the sound thinking of educational leaders in attempting to arrive at well-reasoned decisions is another positive step. The establishment of a

habit of reading books and magazines of a professional and cultural nature should also make a contribution.

The elementary schools are not likely to make their maximum contribution to the educational process if those now engaged as their administrative heads do not become more competent professional leaders.

Public Relations

The importance of public relations has never been fully recognized, but the present need has added emphasis to this particular function of the principal. The chief purpose of public relations should be to develop an atmosphere of sympathy and understanding toward the school. The elementary principal is delegated the task of setting up a positive program of public relations which will achieve this aim. Essential to this program is the realization that when the public is informed about the educational program carried on by the school a cooperative spirit and general interest will increase. The principal should make every effort to establish within the mind of every citizen a feeling that he has a personal stake in the educational program in his school district.

Through the use of well-conducted public opinion polls an elementary administrator can ascertain the community's views on existing or contemplated practices. The responsibility for good public relations should be shared by all personnel in the school. Only through united effort on the part of all can a sound program of public relations be instituted and carried out.

Guidance Function

In order that the principal may discharge effectively his duties to

youth he must have a thorough background in two interrelated areas: first, he must have a knowledge of the mental, physical, and psychological factors which affect the growth of a child; and second, he must have a functional guidance philosophy.

The recent interest in guidance in the elementary area has come from the realization that effective guidance at later levels is conditioned to a large degree by the personnel and adjustment work done in the elementary school. Another equally important reason for increased interest in this area has come from the elementary school itself. The desire to better meet the needs of the whole child has focused attention upon various aspects of the child's school life which influence his behavior and progress through school.

A guidance program should be an integral part of the whole educational program carried on in the elementary school. The main function of such a program should be the harmonious blending of the school and the individual child. The principal can contribute a great deal to a guidance program, but the ultimate success of the program lies with the individual classroom teacher.

The guidance functions of the principal do not terminate at any one point. They become an integral part of the everyday routine as pointed out by Elsbree and McNally:

Many principals set aside a part of each day for conferences with children. Much understanding and guidance may result from a few minutes of personal counselling. It may be to admire a dress, to recognize a birthday, or to give a compliment for work well done. It may be an occasion to comment on a child's service to the school, to share in a family joy, or to know children at first

hand. From close observation of child behavior they learn to identify the facets of child nature upon which more technical knowledge can be built.¹

The guidance philosophy of the elementary principal should permeate all his functions and responsibilities. It should be reflected in the general structure of the school. The attainment of this administrative ideal--democratic administration--can be reached through the functioning of a sound guidance philosophy; for example:

Teachers grow most when they become enthusiastic about improving something which they themselves feel needs to be improved. Problems which teachers identify, therefore, are better areas for study than those which the principal may consider to be important. Through co-operative attacks on real problems of concern to teachers attitudes are modified, teaching efficiency improves, and everyone involved learns.²

It would be well for all elementary principals to think of guidance as an effective means of reaching the objectives of the elementary school.

¹Willard S. Elsbree and Henry J. McNally, Elementary School Administration and Supervision, pp. 22-23. New York: American Book Co., 1951.

²Ibid., p. 18.

CHAPTER III

PROCEDURES USED IN OBTAINING DATA

In an effort to obtain recent data concerning the areas which frequently require point and direction from the principal in the field, a questionnaire was sent to the elementary administrators in 146 communities of ten thousand or less population in the State of Iowa.

The items in the questionnaire came from two sources: first, personal experience and experiences of other graduate students at Drake University; and second, a questionnaire study carried on by Stanley W. McKee was used.¹ The twenty-five areas finally chosen were selected on the basis of their general significance to the size of the school involved in the study.

A letter explaining the nature of the study was mailed with each questionnaire. A self-addressed envelope was included to facilitate the returning of the data. The names and addresses of the principals were secured from the Iowa Educational Directory.

The principals were asked to indicate the frequency of each of the twenty-five problems. A scale, employing four terms, was used to break down the rate of occurrence within given limits. The terms used were daily, often, seldom, and never. It should be noted, however, that in recording the results,

¹Stanley McKee, "A Questionnaire Study of the Elementary School Principalship," Elementary School Journal, XLIX (December, 1948), 215-216.

the items which received no response were tabulated and included in the tables.

A copy of the letter and the questionnaire will be found in the Appendix.¹

The response was gratifying in that 78 per cent of the 146 questionnaires sent out were checked and returned. The responses will serve as a basis for analysis of guidance functions as viewed by those answering the questionnaire.

¹See Appendix, p. 52.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION OF DATA

In order to ascertain the areas of functioning as seen by a selected group of Iowa principals, a total of 146 questionnaires were sent to elementary principals in communities of less than ten thousand in the State of Iowa. These principals were those listed for communities this size in the Iowa Educational Directory, 1950, issued by the Iowa State Department of Public Instruction. The percentage of those returned was 78.7. The results of the 115 questionnaires were then analyzed and organized. Each item in a given area was placed in table form. The findings from the survey, with an interpretation of the illustrated data, will follow.

Selected Guidance Problems

It is the responsibility of the principal to be concerned with the guidance of all the children within his building; however, some problems are so paramount they must be handled primarily. The kinds of problems which receive this type of attention from the principal can be noted in Table 1.

TABLE 1

FREQUENCY WITH WHICH IOWA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS
IN POPULATION AREAS OF LESS THAN 10,000 STATED
THEY HANDLE SELECTED GUIDANCE PROBLEMS
INVOLVING CHILDREN
1950-1951

Problem	Number and Percentage of Responses									
	Daily		Often		Seldom		Never		No Response	
	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent
Remedial	27	23	67	58	17	14	1	0.8	3	2
Prevention of drop-outs	4	3	20	17	49	42	29	25	13	11
Behavior	38	33	53	46	21	18	1	0.8	2	1
Physical defects	5	4	55	47	47	40	5	4	3	2
Promotion	3	2	78	67	31	26	0	0	3	2

The largest percentage of guidance problems dealt with by the principals were remedial problems. A close second involved behavior problems. A high rating is also given to physical defects which, of course, may also be directly or indirectly responsible for behavior and remedial problems.

The supervising of a staff of teachers brings about many problems. The solution of these trouble areas usually becomes the task of the principal. The areas reported as having the greatest significance are given in Table 2.

TABLE 2

FREQUENCY WITH WHICH IOWA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS
IN POPULATION AREAS OF LESS THAN 10,000 STATED
THEY HANDLE SELECTED GUIDANCE PROBLEMS
INVOLVING TEACHERS
1950-1951

Problem	Number and Percentage of Responses									
	Daily		Often		Seldom		Never		No Response	
	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent
In-service training	4	3	36	31	42	36	26	22	7	6
Personality	5	4	31	26	55	47	17	14	7	6
Assignment of duties	20	17	63	54	26	22	1	0.8	5	4
Teachers' meetings	0	0	83	72	27	23	0	0	5	4

Assignment of duties consumes considerable time on the part of these principals. Another problem with which they were often concerned was that of conducting teachers' meetings; this was listed by 72 per cent. The high percentage may indicate the non-functioning of the democratic process or simply that the principles are not applied in a great many of school systems in Iowa. A little over one-fourth indicated that in-service training and personality require attention from them.

In recent years the area of public relations has been shown as the key to good community-school relationships. This task becomes a challenge to the modern elementary principal. The guidance problems which require careful consideration due to their effect on public relations are noted in Table 3.

TABLE 3

FREQUENCY WITH WHICH IOWA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS
IN POPULATION AREAS OF LESS THAN 10,000 STATED
THEY HANDLE SELECTED GUIDANCE PROBLEMS
INVOLVING PUBLIC RELATIONS
1950-1951

Problem	Number and Percentage of Responses									
	Daily		Often		Seldom		Never		No Response	
	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent
Parent-Teacher Association ...	0	0	70	60	11	9	25	21	9	7
Parent-teacher conferences ...	3	2	65	56	41	35	5	4	1	0.8
Local publication	0	0	51	44	48	41	12	10	4	3
Community agencies	1	0.8	60	52	39	33	9	7	6	5
Bulletins to parents	1	0.8	60	52	37	32	11	9	6	5
Report cards	0	0	82	71	21	18	4	3	8	6
Open-house	1	0.8	25	21	68	59	7	6	14	12

Problems concerning report cards are given the highest degree of attention in this area. Yet it is interesting to note that parent-teacher groups and conferences with parents rated second. Community agencies and bulletins to parents were scored as having equal importance by more than half of the principals reporting. Almost half, 44 per cent, rated local publications as an area which needed to be given attention.

A large amount of time is devoted to curriculum by many elementary principals. Curriculum development and improvement of facilities is a constant problem. Different phases of this work will demand more attention than others. Table 4 shows the most often reported phases.

TABLE 4

FREQUENCY WITH WHICH IOWA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS
IN POPULATION AREAS OF LESS THAN 10,000 STATED
THEY HANDLE SELECTED GUIDANCE PROBLEMS
INVOLVING CURRICULAR DEVELOPMENT
AND IMPROVEMENT OF FACILITIES
1950-1951

Problem	Number and Percentage of Responses									
	Daily		Often		Seldom		Never		No Response	
	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent
Planning school program	12	10	73	63	22	19	3	2	5	4
Planning schedules	14	12	71	61	27	23	0	0	3	2
Assembly programs	1	0.8	46	40	48	41	10	8	10	8
Textbooks	3	2	67	58	38	33	2	1	5	4
Library	7	6	64	55	36	31	4	3	4	3
Classroom supplies	14	12	80	69	14	12	3	2	4	3
Improvement of classroom facilities	7	6	70	60	29	25	2	1	7	6
Safety program ..	29	25	63	54	18	15	1	0.8	4	3
Clubs and similar activity programs	3	2	47	40	39	33	15	13	11	9

High concern for the safety program is shown here by the principals. Classroom supplies also present a problem in this area. The items that ranked a close third were planning school programs, planning schedules, and improvement of classroom facilities. Textbooks and the library were indicated by 58 per cent and 55 per cent, respectively, as being areas often needing the attention of the principal.

In order to fully understand the details of the areas previously discussed, it is necessary to break each into specific phases. This provides an opportunity to gauge the extent of a specific problem area.

The modern elementary school strives to meet the needs of every student. A child with a remedial problem often becomes the prime concern of the principal. The data on the frequency of this problem are given in Table 5.

TABLE 5

FREQUENCY WITH WHICH IOWA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS
IN POPULATION AREAS OF LESS THAN 10,000 STATED
THEY HANDLE SELECTED GUIDANCE PROBLEMS
INVOLVING REMEDIAL PROBLEMS
1950-1951

Frequency	Number and Percentage of Responses	
	Number	Percentage
Daily	27	23
Often	67	58
Seldom	17	14
Never	1	0.8
No Response	3	2

Almost one-fourth, 23 per cent, of the responses indicated that this item was a daily problem, while 58 per cent stated that it occurred often.

The prevention of drop-outs is considered by many grade administrators as one of their guidance problems. The statistics gathered in this study indicate pertinent facts regarding this.

TABLE 6

FREQUENCY WITH WHICH IOWA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS
IN POPULATION AREAS OF LESS THAN 10,000 STATED
THEY HANDLE SELECTED GUIDANCE PROBLEMS
INVOLVING PREVENTION OF DROP-OUTS
1950-1951

Frequency	Number and Percentage of Responses	
	Number	Percentage
Daily	4	3
Often	20	17
Seldom	49	42
Never	29	25
No Response	13	11

Probably the reason the responses indicated that the item seldom appears is that the state law requires a child to remain in school until he is past the age of an elementary student. Seventeen per cent of the principals indicated they are often confronted with such problems. Only 25 per cent do not admit this as a problem.

The adjustment of each child to the school environment is important in order that the organized learning process may proceed at a normal pace. When a child's adjustment is poor his everyday behavior betrays the fact. The cases requiring special attention are channeled to the principal.

One-third of those reporting gave evidence that this area is a daily problem. Almost half, 46 per cent, indicated it was an item they dealt with often. Only one principal did not consider this a serious problem. There is every reasonable indication that this is an area of major responsibility for most of the principals.

TABLE 7

FREQUENCY WITH WHICH IOWA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS
IN POPULATION AREAS OF LESS THAN 10,000 STATED
THEY HANDLE SELECTED GUIDANCE PROBLEMS
INVOLVING BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS
1950-1951

Frequency	Number and Percentage of Responses	
	Number	Percentage
Daily	38	33
Often	53	46
Seldom	21	18
Never	1	0.8
No Response	2	1

TABLE 8

FREQUENCY WITH WHICH IOWA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS
IN POPULATION AREAS OF LESS THAN 10,000 STATED
THEY HANDLE SELECTED GUIDANCE PROBLEMS
INVOLVING PHYSICAL DEFECTS
1950-1951

Frequency	Number and Percentage of Responses	
	Number	Percentage
Daily	5	4
Often	55	47
Seldom	47	40
Never	5	4
No Response	3	2

The organization of an elementary school should allow for children with minor physical defects. The principal is usually in a position to help arrange a learning situation which will be adapted to the defect. The child's progress is often determined by how effectively this task is completed. In Table 8 some evidence is given on the rate of occurrence in this area.

The principals reporting on this problem seem to split somewhat equally. There were 47 per cent who reported they were confronted with the problem often, and 40 per cent who indicated that they were seldom called upon to handle a situation in this area.

In most educational institutions a process of evaluation is set up to determine an individual's ability to progress through the various stages of the system. When a student does not meet the standards set for advancement to a specific stage, he is usually retained and forced to repeat the stage. This individual may present a problem to the principal. Table 9 indicates the extent of the problem.

TABLE 9

FREQUENCY WITH WHICH IOWA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS
IN POPULATION AREAS OF LESS THAN 10,000 STATED
THEY HANDLE SELECTED GUIDANCE PROBLEMS
INVOLVING PROMOTION PROBLEMS
1950-1951

Frequency	Number and Percentage of Responses	
	Number	Percentage
Daily	3	2
Often	78	67
Seldom	31	26
Never	0	0
No Response	3	2

More than two-thirds of those reporting stated the question of promotion was often a problem. It can also be noted that 26 per cent gave evidence that they were seldom called upon to give attention to this item.

A great many teachers in Iowa do not have a bachelor's degree. Some schools have adopted methods of in-service training hoping to raise the level of classroom instruction. Table 10 gives some evidence of this procedure.

TABLE 10

FREQUENCY WITH WHICH IOWA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS
IN POPULATION AREAS OF LESS THAN 10,000 STATED
THEY HANDLE SELECTED GUIDANCE PROBLEMS
INVOLVING IN-SERVICE TRAINING
1950-1951

Frequency	Number and Percentage of Responses	
	Number	Percentage
Daily	4	3
Often	36	31
Seldom	42	36
Never	26	22
No Response	7	6

Almost one-third of the principals indicated that they were often concerned with trying to raise the level of instruction. A greater percentage, 36 per cent, indicated that they are seldom confronted with this item. It can be noted that a very high per cent of negative replies were given to this question.

In any organization personality differences may become serious administrative problems. When such a clash takes place among two or more

teachers, the individual responsible for aiding those involved in making an adjustment in terms of staff morale is usually the principal. Table 11 may help to crystalize thinking in this important area.

TABLE 11

FREQUENCY WITH WHICH IOWA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS
IN POPULATION AREAS OF LESS THAN 10,000 STATED
THEY HANDLE SELECTED GUIDANCE PROBLEMS
INVOLVING PERSONALITY PROBLEMS
1950-1951

Frequency	Number and Percentage of Responses	
	Number	Percentage
Daily	5	4
Often	31	26
Seldom	55	47
Never	17	14
No Response	7	6

The responses to this item indicated that 26 per cent of the elementary administrators often had problems in this area. However, almost half, 47 per cent of those reporting, stated that they were seldom called upon to handle personality problems.

The assignment of duties is one of the functions of administration. How often such problems should arise is a question. Many principals think a great portion of their time is taken in delegating duties.

Over half, 54 per cent, of the elementary principals answering the questionnaire stated they often were called upon to handle this type of problem. Add to this 17 per cent who indicated it was a daily item of difficulty, and it can be seen that almost three-fourths of those reporting

indicated it was a problem of significance.

TABLE 12

FREQUENCY WITH WHICH IOWA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS
IN POPULATION AREAS OF LESS THAN 10,000 STATED
THEY HANDLE SELECTED GUIDANCE PROBLEMS
INVOLVING ASSIGNMENT OF DUTIES
1950-1951

Frequency	Number and Percentage of Responses	
	Number	Percentage
Daily	20	17
Often	63	54
Seldom	26	22
Never	1	0.8
No Response	5	4

Teachers' meetings are an essential function of any school staff. The character of these meetings will be reflected in the effectiveness of the school as a whole. The rate that this problem occurs is indicated in Table 13.

Almost three-fourths, 72 per cent, indicated that they often had problems which must be solved in teachers' meetings. Twenty-three per cent of the elementary principals stated that they seldom had difficulties to smooth out in teachers' meetings.

TABLE 13

FREQUENCY WITH WHICH IOWA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS
IN POPULATION AREAS OF LESS THAN 10,000 STATED
THEY HANDLE SELECTED GUIDANCE PROBLEMS
INVOLVING TEACHERS' MEETINGS
1950-1951

Frequency	Number and Percentage of Responses	
	Number	Percentage
Daily	0	0
Often	83	72
Seldom	27	23
Never	0	0
No Response	5	4

TABLE 14

FREQUENCY WITH WHICH IOWA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS
IN POPULATION AREAS OF LESS THAN 10,000 STATED
THEY HANDLE SELECTED GUIDANCE PROBLEMS
INVOLVING PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATION
1950-1951

Frequency	Number and Percentage of Responses	
	Number	Percentage
Daily	0	0
Often	70	60
Seldom	11	9
Never	25	21
No Response	9	7

Parent-teacher organizations, as a community agency, can be extremely helpful with the many problems that arise in any elementary

school. However, every association has weaknesses and the members of Parent-Teacher Associations look for point and direction from the elementary principal.

The results of this survey gave evidence that 61 per cent of the elementary administrators had problems involving parent-teacher associations. There were 22 per cent who indicated that they were never called upon to solve difficulties in this area.

TABLE 15

FREQUENCY WITH WHICH IOWA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS
IN POPULATION AREAS OF LESS THAN 10,000 STATED
THEY HANDLE SELECTED GUIDANCE PROBLEMS
INVOLVING PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES
1950-1951

Frequency	Number and Percentage of Responses	
	Number	Percentage
Daily	3	2
Often	65	56
Seldom	41	35
Never	5	4
No Response	1	0.8

The use of parent-teacher conferences is on the increase in the elementary school area. In many situations the principal is directly or indirectly connected with developing techniques for the conferences. The procedures present problems for many elementary principals. The above table contains statistical data pertinent to the problem.

Over half, 56 per cent, of those reporting disclosed they often used guidance techniques in this area. Thirty-five per cent admitted no problem with the parent-teacher conferences.

A sound program of public relations is needed by all schools. Local publication can aid the administrator in portraying the school program to the community. Table 16 indicates the frequency of use of such publications for guiding public thinking.

TABLE 16

FREQUENCY WITH WHICH IOWA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS
IN POPULATION AREAS OF LESS THAN 10,000 STATED
THEY HANDLE SELECTED GUIDANCE PROBLEMS
INVOLVING LOCAL PUBLICATIONS
1950-1951

Frequency	Number and Percentage of Responses	
	Number	Percentage
Daily	0	0
Often	51	44
Seldom	48	41
Never	12	10
No Response	4	3

Those reporting were almost equally divided on this item. Forty-four per cent felt the problem came up often, but 41 per cent of the elementary principals who cooperated in this study thought that guidance problems in this area seldom concerned them.

The elementary administrator works with and through the various community agencies in an effort to better meet the needs of every child.

Some groups purchase glasses for needy students or see that necessary dental work is given attention. Instruction in swimming and handicraft is offered by other agencies. Table 17 presents data concerning how often problems arise in this area.

TABLE 17

FREQUENCY WITH WHICH IOWA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS
IN POPULATION AREAS OF LESS THAN 10,000 STATED
THEY HANDLE SELECTED GUIDANCE PROBLEMS
INVOLVING COMMUNITY AGENCIES
1950-1951

Frequency	Number and Percentage of Responses	
	Number	Percentage
Daily	1	0.8
Often	60	52
Seldom	39	33
Never	9	7
No Response	6	5

Slightly over half, 52 per cent, of those returning the questionnaire gave evidence that the problem appeared often. Thirty-three per cent considered that they seldom were confronted with the problem of working with community agencies.

Bulletins to parents are used by many schools to communicate information to the parent concerning the school's activities. This endeavor sometimes becomes a source of difficulty. Table 18 denotes the frequency of such a problem.

TABLE 18

FREQUENCY WITH WHICH IOWA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS
IN POPULATION AREAS OF LESS THAN 10,000 STATED
THEY HANDLE SELECTED GUIDANCE PROBLEMS
INVOLVING BULLETIN TO PARENTS
1950-1951

Frequency	Number and Percentage of Responses	
	Number	Percentage
Daily	1	0.8
Often	60	52
Seldom	37	32
Never	11	9
No Response	6	5

Fifty-two per cent stated that they were confronted with this problem often. About one-third, 32 per cent, indicated they were seldom called upon to handle difficulties arising from such bulletins.

Almost all schools periodically send home some report on the child's progress in the classroom. The type of procedure and form used varies widely. Educators themselves are in disagreement as to the value of the different types of reports. It can, therefore, be expected to be an area in which problems would arise. Table 19 is a manifestation of the preceding statement.

Almost three-fourths, 71 per cent, of those reporting indicated they often had problems in this area. This perhaps is due to the fact that teachers cannot agree on items of evaluation and reporting, and thus the principal faces a problem of inconsistency in meaning for the reported item.

Only 18 per cent gave evidence of seldom being called upon to handle an item of this nature.

TABLE 19

FREQUENCY WITH WHICH IOWA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS
IN POPULATION AREAS OF LESS THAN 10,000 STATED
THEY HANDLE SELECTED GUIDANCE PROBLEMS
INVOLVING REPORT CARDS
1950-1951

Frequency	Number and Percentage of Responses	
	Number	Percentage
Daily	0	0
Often	82	71
Seldom	21	18
Never	4	3
No Response	8	6

TABLE 20

FREQUENCY WITH WHICH IOWA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS
IN POPULATION AREAS OF LESS THAN 10,000 STATED
THEY HANDLE SELECTED GUIDANCE PROBLEMS
INVOLVING OPEN-HOUSE
1950-1951

Frequency	Number and Percentage of Responses	
	Number	Percentage
Daily	1	0.8
Often	25	21
Seldom	68	59
Never	7	6
No Response ...	14	12

The open house activity varies in frequency with each elementary school. However, the practice does prevail in some degree in most schools, and this often presents problems for the elementary administrator. The intensity of the difficulty in this area is shown in Table 20 on the previous page.

Only 21 per cent of the principals noted this area as a problem. Fifty-nine per cent stated they were seldom called upon to handle difficulties in this area.

The organization of the school program takes careful planning. The degree to which the ingredients will change from year to year depends upon the administration, teachers, and community. The process of planning a program might well bring about problems because of the diversity of opinion among these groups. The elementary principal is often called upon to guide

TABLE 21

FREQUENCY WITH WHICH IOWA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS
IN POPULATION AREAS OF LESS THAN 10,000 STATED
THEY HANDLE SELECTED GUIDANCE PROBLEMS
INVOLVING PLANNING SCHOOL PROGRAM
1950-1951

Frequency	Number and Percentage of Responses	
	Number	Percentage
Daily	12	10
Often	73	63
Seldom	22	19
Never	3	2
No Response	5	4

these groups. Table 21 presents data in connection with the preceding statement.

Sixty-three per cent were of the opinion that problems often appeared in this area. It was a daily difficulty for 10 per cent of those reporting. There were only 19 per cent who indicated they seldom were called upon to give point and direction in planning the school program.

The education of millions of young people in this nation requires the use of various organizational procedures. Schedule procedures are often used as one means of simplifying the execution of a complicated task. Too often this procedure becomes an end in itself instead of a means to an end. Some evidence of the significance of this area to elementary principals can be noted.

TABLE 22

FREQUENCY WITH WHICH IOWA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS
IN POPULATION AREAS OF LESS THAN 10,000 STATED
THEY HANDLE SELECTED GUIDANCE PROBLEMS
INVOLVING PLANNING SCHEDULES
1950-1951

Frequency	Number and Percentage of Responses	
	Number	Percentage
Daily	14	12
Often	71	61
Seldom	27	23
Never	0	0
No Response	3	2

Twelve per cent indicated that this problem was one of daily occurrence. It was reported by 61 per cent that the problem of planning

schedules often required their attention. Only 23 per cent stated they were seldom called upon to handle difficulties in this area.

There is great value in having children either observe or participate in interesting assembly programs. These programs can be divided into two types: first, the program which takes place in the classroom and is based on the interest of the group involved; and second, the program which is held in the auditorium and which is broad in nature though geared to the special interests of children. This second type often provides an opportunity for the child to come in contact with valuable resource personnel. The elementary principal is often called upon to organize such programs. An indication of how often problems arise in this area is shown in Table 23.

TABLE 23

FREQUENCY WITH WHICH IOWA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS
IN POPULATION AREAS OF LESS THAN 10,000 STATED
THEY HANDLE SELECTED GUIDANCE PROBLEMS
INVOLVING ASSEMBLY PROGRAMS
1950-1951

Frequency	Number and Percentage of Responses	
	Number	Percentage
Daily	1	0.8
Often	46	40
Seldom	48	41
Never	10	8
No Response	10	8

The responses to this area were almost equally divided. Forty per cent felt that problems often arise in the area of assembly programs,

while 41 per cent were of the opinion that they seldom were called upon to handle difficulties in this area. The 8 per cent who indicated that they never had a problem in this area may represent those schools which lack the facilities for such programs.

The examining and selecting of textbooks is an established procedure in most schools. The trend toward having teachers take part in the selection of textbooks should greatly increase the value of this tool used in the educating process. There still remains an administrative task and its significance may be noted in Table 24.

TABLE 24

FREQUENCY WITH WHICH IOWA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS
IN POPULATION AREAS OF LESS THAN 10,000 STATED
THEY HANDLE SELECTED GUIDANCE PROBLEMS
INVOLVING TEXTBOOKS
1950-1951

Frequency	Number and Percentage of Responses	
	Number	Percentage
Daily	3	2
Often	67	58
Seldom	38	33
Never	2	1
No Response	5	4

More than half, 58 per cent, reported they were often called upon to solve difficulties in the area of textbooks. Thirty-three per cent indicated they seldom dealt with textbook selection. This may be due to the fact that textbooks are often purchased by one administrator who moves

immediately, leaving materials which must of financial necessity be used over a period of several years.

Library facilities are important to every school. In some communities the municipal library is often used by the school in order to provide a larger selection of books. The classroom libraries require constant attention if they are to remain a functional part of the learning program carried on by the school. Table 25 denotes the frequency of problems involving the library.

TABLE 25

FREQUENCY WITH WHICH IOWA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS
IN POPULATION AREAS OF LESS THAN 10,000 STATED
THEY HANDLE SELECTED GUIDANCE PROBLEMS
INVOLVING LIBRARY
1950-1951

Frequency	Number and Percentage of Responses	
	Number	Percentage
Daily	7	6
Often	64	55
Seldom	36	31
Never	4	3
No Response	4	3

It is interesting to note that 6 per cent of the elementary principals felt that the library was a daily problem. Over half, 55 per cent, gave evidence that such difficulties were often referred to them. There were 31 per cent of the grade administrators who indicated they were seldom called upon to give point and direction to this item.

The quality of the materials of instruction will have a direct relationship to the effectiveness of the school program. Too often the only excuse offered for the absence of supplies is budgetary limitation. Many communities have solved this type of problem when intelligently informed of the need. The responsibility for providing an adequate number of classroom supplies usually falls on the shoulders of the grade administrator.

TABLE 26

FREQUENCY WITH WHICH IOWA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS
IN POPULATION AREAS OF LESS THAN 10,000 STATED
THEY HANDLE SELECTED GUIDANCE PROBLEMS
INVOLVING CLASSROOM SUPPLIES
1950-1951

Frequency	Number and Percentage of Responses	
	Number	Percentage
Daily	14	12
Often	80	69
Seldom	14	12
Never	3	2
No Response ...	4	3

The results compiled in the area of classroom supplies should be of significance to elementary principals. Twelve per cent stated it was a daily problem. Almost three-fourths, 69 per cent, indicated it was often an item of difficulty. There were only 12 per cent who gave evidence that problems seldom arose regarding supplies for classrooms.

The facilities of a classroom will immeasurably aid the teacher in

forming a well-rounded learning situation. A number of items of equipment come under this category and their purchase should be determined by the effectiveness of their use. The appearance of problems in this area is indicated in Table 27.

TABLE 27

FREQUENCY WITH WHICH IOWA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS
IN POPULATION AREAS OF LESS THAN 10,000 STATED
THEY HANDLE SELECTED GUIDANCE PROBLEMS
INVOLVING IMPROVEMENT OF CLASSROOM
FACILITIES
1950-1951

Frequency	Number and Percentage of Responses	
	Number	Percentage
Daily	7	6
Often	70	60
Seldom	29	25
Never	2	1
No Response	7	6

Six per cent designated this area as being one in which problems arise daily. Over half, 60 per cent, indicated that often problems occurred in the process of improving classroom facilities. There were 25 per cent who denoted that problems of this nature seldom occurred in their schools. There is no indication as to whether the facilities were adequate or whether the principal had merely failed to observe any need.

A well-balanced safety program is another responsibility which schools have undertaken. There are two major phases of this activity: first, the program that is carried on by the school to aid the child in

gaining an attitude of safety which will be retained throughout life; and second, the preventive measures which are taken to provide the best possible safety conditions for the child from the time he leaves his home until he returns. The administering of a safety program is usually given to the principal. How often problems occur in this area is indicated in Table 28.

TABLE 28

FREQUENCY WITH WHICH IOWA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS
IN POPULATION AREAS OF LESS THAN 10,000 STATED
THEY HANDLE SELECTED GUIDANCE PROBLEMS
INVOLVING SAFETY PROGRAM
1950-1951

Frequency	Number and Percentage of Responses	
	Number	Percentage
Daily	29	25
Often	63	54
Seldom	18	15
Never	1	0.8
No Response	4	3

Twenty-five per cent of the elementary principals indicated this area was a daily problem. More than twice this percentage, 54 per cent, stated that a safety program was often a source of difficulty. Only 15 per cent seldom encountered problems. The complexity of the traffic in the community, the crowded conditions of the schools, and other factors may possibly affect the role of the principal in this area.

Extra-curricular activities in the elementary school can easily be justified by orienting one's thinking in terms of the needs of children.

High interest is a prerequisite to sound learning. It can easily be seen that a child will gain much when he engages in an activity in which he has a dominant interest. The task of maintaining such activities which will continue to be vital and dynamic after being instituted becomes that of the principal.

TABLE 29

FREQUENCY WITH WHICH IOWA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS
IN POPULATION AREAS OF LESS THAN 10,000 STATED
THEY HANDLE SELECTED GUIDANCE PROBLEMS
INVOLVING CLUBS AND SIMILAR ACTIVITY
PROGRAMS
1950-1951

Frequency	Number and Percentage of Responses	
	Number	Percentage
Daily	3	2
Often	47	40
Seldom	39	33
Never	15	13
No Response	11	9

The replies to this item were almost equally divided. There were 40 per cent who gave evidence that clubs and similar activities often presented problems for the principal. Thirty-three per cent indicated they were seldom called upon to handle difficulties in this area. Some schools avoid this type of activity program and that may be an explanation of this 33 per cent plus the 13 per cent who never experience any difficulty here.

It is possible to draw certain conclusions concerning the materials

presented in the foregoing tables; however, the author feels the terminology of some of the items in the questionnaire was not fully understood by all those participating in the study and these limitations should be recognized.

An attempt will be made to analyze a number of the functions which can be assumed to be generally significant from the material already presented.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The importance of the functions performed by elementary principals has been recognized nationally. But in Iowa, because of the fact that it is a rural state and that there are many small towns, this school position is often viewed as a nominal one. The principal teaches a class, is held responsible for a few records, takes care of outstanding discipline problems, and receives a few dollars per month extra for the job. However, during the last ten years with better training for administrators recognition of the numerous functions of the elementary principal is slowly coming into the educational picture of Iowa.

In towns of less than ten thousand it is interesting to note how many functions are assumed by the elementary principals at the present time. The questionnaire, based on a guidance point of view, asked these principals for this information. From the tables in the preceding chapter it is possible to find those functions most usually performed.

The functions generally performed are:

1. Working with problems involving remedial pupils.
2. Working with problems involving classroom supplies.
3. Working with problems involving a safety program.
4. Working with behavior problems.

Functions less generally performed are:

1. Working with problems involving the prevention of drop-outs.
2. Working with problems involving the open-house activity.
3. Working with personality problems.
4. Working with problems involving the in-service training of teachers.

These two lists are of significance because they indicate the present level of responsibility generally given to the elementary principal in towns of ten thousand or less.

The first two items on the list of functions generally performed were given equal rating by the principals. There seems to be very little direct relationship between the items and they, therefore, will be discussed separately.

The fact that the elementary principal is often called upon to work with children who have remedial problems is noteworthy. The factors which bring about this situation should be ascertained. It seems within the realm of sound reasoning to suggest that remedial problems stem from the inability of the school to meet the needs of the child. The problem will often remain unsolved even though the principal is well trained and is given ample time to carry out measures for its solution. The core of the problem must be located. It behooves the elementary principal to examine the educational structure of the school and ascertain what segments are not in accord with the philosophy of meeting the needs of each child. Basic to the above procedure would be an understanding on the part of the administration, teachers, and community that the person best able to carry out such a task is the elementary principal.

The fact that problems involving classroom supplies was indicated with the same frequency as remedial problems brought a feeling of perplexity. The implication that the elementary principal has not devised an adequate means for distributing supplies to classrooms seems remote. However, in many cases this may be part of the problem. The responsibility for this situation does not rest solely with the elementary principal. In a great many situations the purchasing is conducted by the superintendent with slight reference to requisitions. The supplies are purchased in large quantities because of discounts offered with volume buying. The administrative head may change his position shortly thereafter but the supplies will remain. The new superintendent seeks to use up these supplies with the idea of economy. The needs of some of the teachers and children have changed and the problem of classroom supplies, therefore, becomes one of major importance to the principal.

The function which ranked second in importance with the grade administrators was their activity with a safety program. On the whole, this indication seems gratifying; however, one must realize that the size of the community and the location of the school are factors which would determine the significant need for a safety program. There are two factors which may make this item outstanding in the minds of elementary principals: first, the over-crowded conditions within the building may increase the possibilities of accidents; and second, safety hazards may increase on the playground and accident rates go up when more and more children are forced to play in the same limited area.

The area which ranked third was that of behavior problems. The responsibility for this area has been traditionally one of the principal.

The manner in which the problems are handled will largely determine the solution, recurrence, and frequency. A behavior problem is usually an individual who has not adjusted to his environment. Probably the reason this problem was given a high rating is that many teachers do not have a functional guidance philosophy since courses in guidance are not required in many training programs for elementary teachers; therefore, they may depend upon the principal for aid. If both the teacher and the principal have a sound guidance philosophy and a mastery of the techniques involved in aiding a child to adapt to his surroundings, there would be few behavior problems. Only in extreme cases should behavior problems be brought to the attention of the principal.

It is interesting to note that planning the school program did not rate within the three highest functions. If the concept of the leadership principle were adhered to, the grade administrator would at all times be cooperatively planning with various members of the staff in an effort to have the school program meet the needs of the pupils.

It is significant also to note those functions which were seldom performed by the elementary principal.

The area which seemed to present the least difficulties was the prevention of drop-outs. The writer felt this evidence indicated not only a lack of awareness on the part of the principals but also a shunning of responsibility by the grade administrator. A child's desire to leave school is often nurtured when he experiences continued failure in his grade environment. By law in the State of Iowa a child cannot leave school until he is sixteen years old. In many cases his mind is made up to leave school long before he reaches this age. It is generally agreed that a child's success

in the elementary school will color his success in junior high and high school. The principles of modern education would indicate that elementary principals and teachers need to become increasingly aware of their responsibility in the prevention of drop-outs.

Open-house activity ranked second in the functions least performed by the elementary principals. This is probably due to the fact that this activity usually takes place only once a year. It would be well for the elementary principal to examine this activity in the light of his public relations program and attempt to ascertain the need for change through this examination.

The item ranking third in the duties least executed by the grade administrator was personality problems. This indication may be a result of a misinterpretation in the terms employed in describing this area. If the words "personality problems" carried the connotation to the reader of a clash between the personality of the principal and other individuals, then a low indication could be expected. However, if the principal has a full classroom load and his responsibilities center around clerical duties, the possibility of personality clashes is diminished.

The in-service training of teachers was fourth in the functions least performed. This would clearly indicate that the elementary principal is given or has accepted little responsibility for increasing the level of instruction within his school. In view of the increased need for elementary teachers and the desire to raise the standards of required training, this non-functioning seems illogical.

The implication of this study should be considered in the light of

the following observation. The terminology employed in some of the items in the questionnaire carried various connotations to those who read it. These limitations should be recognized and cognizance taken of them.

From this study of some of the functions of the elementary principal one can readily recognize two salient facts: first, the versatility needed in order to become an effective administrator in the elementary school; and second, that through a close association with children, teachers, and the community the guidance responsibilities of the elementary principal may be fulfilled.

Often it is the principal's enthusiasm and interest which determine the direction and progress of the elementary school in becoming effective in the lives of those it serves. Ruth Strang emphasizes this point:

Teachers may expect many kinds of assistance from the principal in his role as supervisor, administrator, and promoter of good public relations. He should have the guidance program at heart. He should be an inspiration to the teachers and have faith in their ability. He should kindle their enthusiasm for doing right by every student, while he recognizes the difficulties under which they work. Far too many teachers have lost their first enthusiasm and have gradually deteriorated or become routinized because they did not have the leadership of an inspiring principal.¹

The principal who has developed a functional guidance program is aiding immeasurably the development of citizens who will contribute to our democratic way of life. Uppermost in his mind should be the thought that our schools must not only teach the democratic way of life but that they must also be administered democratically.

The author feels that this study has only scratched the surface in

¹Strang, op. cit., pp. 74-75.

ascertaining the functions of the elementary principal in the State of Iowa. There is need for further investigation to determine the scope and direction of this administrative position so that the functions performed will meet the growing needs of the elementary school child.

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APPENDIX

Letter Which Accompanied the Questionnaire

Indianola, Iowa
March 1, 1951

Dear Sir:

As a partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Master's degree at Drake University, I am working on a field study concerned with the problems confronting the elementary principal. In order to gain up-to-date and accurate material I am sending a check list to the elementary principals in Iowa.

Will you please take a few minutes of your time and complete the enclosed check list. A stamped addressed envelope is enclosed for your convenience.

May I take this opportunity to say "thank you" for your co-operation.

Very truly yours,

William P. Treloar

The Questionnaire

I. How often do you as a principal work with the following guidance problems that involve children.

	Daily	Often	Seldom	Never
1. Remedial problems				
2. Prevention of drop-outs				
3. Behavior problems				
4. Physical defects				
5. Promotion problems				

II. With guidance problems that involve teachers.

	Daily	Often	Seldom	Never
1. In-service training				
2. Personality problems				
3. Assignment of duties				
4. Teachers' meetings				

III. With guidance problems that involve public relations.

	Daily	Often	Seldom	Never
1. P. T. A.				
2. Parent-teacher conferences ..				
3. Local publication				
4. Community agencies				
5. Bulletins to parents				
6. Report cards				
7. Open-house				

IV. With guidance problems in curricular development and improvement of facilities.

	Daily	Often	Seldom	Never
1. Planning school program				
2. Planning schedules				
3. Assembly programs				
4. Textbooks				
5. Library				
6. Classroom supplies				
7. Improvement of classroom facilities				
8. Safety program				
9. Clubs and similar activity programs				

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